

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING January 25, 2018 - Page | 1

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Alexa Garvey, Board Secretary, Deborah Downie, Candace Anderson, Jack Morehouse, Alisa Morrison, and Craig Esposito.

Also, present were Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Student Government Representative, Madison Geiger, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

Comments from Citizens Relative to the Budget

Sue Jones had questions on the pupil services and athletic trainer line item 313 on the budget has a decrease of \$20M. Ms. Jones added she would like to be sure that we have an athletic trainer at the high school whenever there is any athletic event going on. Mr. Todisco will get this information back to Ms. Jones.

2018-2019 Budget Discussion and Direction

Dr. Van Riley explained there were new budget books dated January 25th because the previous ones distributed at the last Board meeting had errors in the budget under the previous year column with totals that did not tally correctly. Dr. Riley added this is the only change to the proposed budget information. Dr. Riley reported that he received a list of ten questions since the last Board meeting from Board members. Dr. Riley noted that these questions and answers are available tonight, and explained question number nine – the reason for the increase is due to all districts were charged an additional \$1,000 for the ECC Membership and track meet fees went up due to more students participating in this sport so there is an additional fee. Dr. Riley reported that an additional question came in regarding snow removal at the high school. Dr. Riley explained \$24,000 is budgeted for a contracted service for the high school only. Dr. Riley added the other part of the question was why the town does not do that service. Dr. Riley explained the town at the time the decision was made the trucks could not make turns in the parking lot, so we took that over, which has been the same for several years; the town does plow our other schools.

Deborah Downie asked if the track meet expense of \$500 is per track meet. Dr. Riley explained the \$500 is for the season, the total is \$1650, which includes the ECC Membership fee.

Madison Geiger, Student Government Representative, commented on the student parking fee at the high school of \$100. Ms. Geiger requested that the fee be taken away, since students have other expenses already and have a hard time paying it. Ms. Geiger added that area schools pay a smaller fee. Chairman Todisco asked Ms. Geiger if she would like to get rid of the fee entirely. Chairman Todisco also asked if there a recommendation based on research done. Ms. Geiger added maybe have a \$5 fee to hold a spot but you could park anywhere. Deborah Downie asked if the fee was going to snow removal. Alisa Morrison noted that she believes it is dedicated to something else, like athletics. Mr. Friese answered that years ago it was for athletics. Ms. Geiger noted that students would probably be ok with it coming back to the students to fund other activities. Alisa Morrison asked that administration look further into this issue. Craig Esposito recalled that the previous Superintendent Masterjoseph allocated this fee for parking maintenance. Chairman Todisco recommended the Student Government work with Mr. Friese and Mr. Curland to come up with an amicable solution that can be recommended back to the Board. Chairman Todisco asked to research the history, if it should be going to student activities bring that back to the Board. Ms. Geiger asked as Student Government if we think that it would benefit more to eliminate the fee altogether could that be another proposal. Chairman Todisco agreed that whatever Ms. Geiger comes forward with be addressed with the high school administration first. Chairman Todisco asked if this can be done in the next couple of weeks, it can be put on the agenda at the next Board meeting. Dr. Riley added in the meantime we will look and see, budgets change, so there might be some ways to fund this one way or another, whether the full or partial amount.

Alisa Morrison asked what the next steps and timeline is for the budget. Chairman Todisco explained the past practice is the Superintendent presents the budget at the January Board meeting; there are budget workshops for the Board to ask additional questions, seek additional information, and make recommendations for changes. The next step is to move the proposed budget forward for vote at the February Board meeting; once it is approved, it then goes to the Board of Finance in by March 1 and then the Board of Finance would set the hearing dates. Chairman Todisco asked the Board if they would like another budget workshop meeting. Alisa Morrison answered she does not think we need one. Dr. Riley commented that the only suggested change is the parking fee, so we will look at the financial implications of the parking fees and come back with options for a vote at the February Board meeting. Chairman Todisco noted that he wants to make sure the Board has all their questions regarding the budget answered, and asked if the Board needs any more information. Craig Esposito asked if we have any idea of what the state might do with the education budget. Chairman Todisco stated he does not have information on the state budget. Chairman Todisco stated, as in the past there is a constant dialogue on this issue and information is shared with the two other Boards as we move forward.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 1: To Adjourn at 7:19 p.m.

All: Aye


Alexa J. Garvey Board Secretary